

## Depicting Madness, Poeticising Love – Takamura Kōtarō's Chieko shō

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### Introduction

妻智恵子が南品川ゼームス坂病院の十五号室で精神分裂症患者として粟粒性肺結核で死んでから旬日で満二年になる。<sup>1</sup>

"In ten days it will be fully two years since my wife, Chieko, died of miliary tuberculosis while a schizophrenic patient in Room 15 of James-zaka Hospital, in Minami Shinagawa."<sup>2</sup>

With these words opens an essay Kōtarō wrote after the death of his wife, in which he reflects upon her schizophrenia and death. "The Latter Half of Chieko's Life" (智恵子の半生) was later published together with the collection of poems entitled *Chieko shō* (Selected Poems on Chieko, or simply Chieko in Sato Hiroaki's English translation). *Chieko shō* was written between 1912 and 1941 (i.e. the year the collection was published). It consists of forty seven poems (*shi*) and six *tanka* referring to the time since Takamura Kōtarō and Chieko Naganuma met through their love and life together till her death in 1938. Many of the poems are written

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<sup>1</sup> K. Takamura, "Chieko no hansei", in K. Takamura, *Chieko shō*, (Tōkyō, 1956), p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> Idem, "The Latter Half of Chieko's Life", in *A Brief History of Imbecility. Poetry and Prose of Takamura Kōtarō*, transl. H. Sato, (Honolulu, 192), p. 215.

in retrospect and are governed by Kōtarō's conviction that love and art are inextricably related.

Takamura explains the origin of his artistic endeavour as follows:

その製作が心の底から生れ出て、生きた血を持つに至るには、必ずそこに大きな愛のやりとりがある。<sup>3</sup>

("for the work to come from the bottom of your heart and acquire living blood, an exchange of great love is absolutely needed").<sup>4</sup>

Of course, it is possible to judge his poetic account as often contradictory to the facts of his and Chieko's lives, as Phyllis Birnbaum did in his chapter "He Stole Her Sky"<sup>5</sup>. Chieko in the poems is Takamura's "muse, lover, force of nature" – Birnbaum claims and adds that it is also possible to interpret this collection as a prove of "how an egotistical husband crushed his wife's ambitions."<sup>6</sup> It is possible to juxtapose Takamura's poetic imagery, e.g. of his visit at Chieko's bed in a hospital as rendered in "Lemon Elegy" (レモン哀歌), with the facts from his life and conclude as Birnbaum does:

Now the poem feels less sincere, since we know that in real life this husband hadn't visited his wife for five months prior to her death. The true story, vivid and compelling, intrudes more and more upon our poetry, fiction, and painting these days. Chieko and Kōtarō's tale makes us watch with worry as the facts once again encroach too closely upon the beauty of art.<sup>7</sup>

This paper, however, does not focus on the discrepancy between Takamura's representation of Chieko and the information, rather scant, on how he treated her in real-life. Its aim is to analyse the representation of madness in *Chieko shō* while taking into consideration the composition of the volume, the recurrent images and the language used. I would especially like to speak about how Kōtarō poeticises madness while exploring the questions of silence, nature, art and love.

## 1. Madness in *Chieko shō*

It is difficult to determine when exactly the poeticising of madness begins in *Chieko shō*. In his biography of Takamura Kōtarō Donald Keene notices that the

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<sup>3</sup> Idem, "Chieko no hansei", p. 124.

<sup>4</sup> Idem, "The Latter Half of Chieko's Life", p. 215.

<sup>5</sup> P. Birnbaum, *Modern Girls, Shining Stars, the Skies of Tokyo: 5 Japanese Women*, (New York, 1999), pp. 55-102.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 56-57.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

first symptoms of Chieko's breakdown were seen around 1931.<sup>8</sup> However, certain characteristics of Chieko, later interwoven into Takamura's portrait of a mad woman, are present from the very first poem – "To Someone" (人に) written in July 25, 1912, shortly after Takamura and Chieko met.

いやなんです  
あなたのいつてしまふのが――

No, no, I don't like it  
your going away -

花よりさきに実のなるやうな  
種子よりさきに芽の出るやうな  
夏から春のすぐ来るやうな  
そんな理窟に合はない不自然を  
どうかしないでみて下さい  
型のやうな旦那さまと  
まるい字をかくそのあなたと  
かう考へてさへなぜか私は泣かれます  
小鳥のやうに臆病で  
大風のやうにわがままな  
あなたがお嫁にゆくなんて

Like fruit coming before blossom  
like bud sprouting before seed  
like spring immediately following summer,  
that's not logical, please don't do  
so unnatural a thing.  
A husband as if cast in a mold  
and you with your smooth and round hand-  
writing,  
the mere thought makes me cry.  
You, who are timid as a bird,  
wilful as a gale,  
you are to be a bride

いやなんです  
あなたのいつてしまふのが――<sup>9</sup>

No, no, I don't like it  
Your going away -<sup>10</sup>

The speaker in the poem addresses a young woman. Takamura claims that it was only toward the end that he began to notice for the first time, though in no clear manner, that something about Chieko was odd.<sup>11</sup> However, the way he depicts his future wife is rather consistent, from the beginning of the volume till the very end. Chieko is both bashful/feeble and determined/adamant, often compared to a child or to a bird and to various forces of nature. She is, as Takamura puts it in another poem – "Two People under a Tree" (樹下の二人, 1921), a "mysterious, distinct body" (不思議な別箇の肉身).<sup>12</sup>

Despite the consistent qualities of Chieko there are also some changes in her, either already happening or predicted in the poems. In "To Someone" (人に),

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<sup>8</sup> D. Keene, *Dawn to the West. Japanese Literature of the Modern Era. Poetry, Drama, Criticism*, (New York, 1999), p. 297.

<sup>9</sup> K. Takamura, *Chieko shō*, (Tōkyō, 1956), pp. 9-10.

<sup>10</sup> Idem, "Part II: Chieko", p. 93.

<sup>11</sup> It was only toward the end that I began to notice for the first time, though in no clear manner, that something about her was odd. Until then I had not had a smidgen of doubt about her mental state. In other words, she was abnormal, but she wasn't. K. Takamura, „The Latter Half of Chieko's Life", p. 226.

<sup>12</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 63.

written in February 1913, Chieko is shown in a romantic relation with the speaker in the poem:

愛する心のはちきれた時  
あなたは私に会ひに来る  
すべてを棄て、すべてをのり超え  
すべてをふみにじり  
又嬉嬉として<sup>13</sup>

When your loving heart bursts  
you come to see me  
discarding all, overcoming all  
trampling upon all  
and joyfully<sup>14</sup>

There are moments in *Chieko shō* when Chieko is fearless – motivated by romantic love to run to her lover despite all adversities.

What is important from the point of view of how Takamura depicted Chieko's madness, however, is the fact that in retrospect, many phrases used in his poems may be read as a kind of anticipation of Chieko's madness. In "Cattle on a Mad Run" (狂奔する牛, June 17, 1925), for example, the speaker comments on Chieko's first reaction to the cows chasing "in their wild stampede" (狂奔する).

ああ、あなたがそんなにおびえるのは  
今のあれを見たのですね。  
まるで通り魔のやうに、  
この深山のまきの林をとどろかして、  
この深い寂寞の境にあんな雪崩をまき  
起して、  
今はもうどこかへ往つてしまつた  
あの狂奔する牛の群を。<sup>15</sup>

Are you so frightened because  
you saw what just passed  
Like a spectre,  
thundering through those black pines,  
and avalanche in this zone of deep silence,  
now completely gone,  
the cattle herd on a mad run.<sup>16</sup>

In the poem ferocious animals are juxtaposed with a feeble woman who is frightened of their power. The animals are "bloody, young and transfigured" (血まみれの、若い、あの変貌した, 65) – dramatically different from a quiet young woman – but they also symbolise the force of nature which the woman is about to discover in herself. A discovery which may throw her into the depths of insanity.

The first poem that openly speaks of Chieko's madness – "Life in Perspective" (人生遠視) – was written in 1935, January 22:

足もとから鳥がたつ  
自分の妻が狂気する  
自分の着物がぼろになる

A bird flaps up from your feet.  
Your wife goes insane.  
Your cloths turn to rags.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>14</sup> Idem, "Part II: Chieko", p. 99.

<sup>15</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 64.

<sup>16</sup> Idem, "Part II: Chieko", p. 110.

照尺距離三千メートル  
ああこの鉄砲は長すぎる<sup>17</sup>

Range: ten thousand feet.  
Ah, this gun is too long.<sup>18</sup>

Chieko is presented here as someone walking among birds or even flying with them, which emphasises her distance from the human world. “Your wife goes insane.” or rather “my wife goes insane” 自分の妻が狂気する. The visible sign of the woman’s insanity are her ragged clothes. Three months later (April 24-25, 1935) Kōtarō reiterates his opinion on Chieko’s condition in another poetic image. In “Chieko Riding the Wind” 風にのる智恵子 he speaks of his wife as “mad” 狂った. The image of Chieko flying (智恵子飛ぶ), riding the wind echoes the image of the birds flapping from her feet:

狂った智恵子は口をきかない  
ただ尾長や千鳥と相図する  
(...)  
尾長や千鳥が智恵子の友だち  
もう人間であることをやめた智恵子に  
恐ろしくきれいな朝の天空は絶好の遊  
歩場  
智恵子飛ぶ<sup>19</sup>

Chieko, now mad, will not speak  
and only with blue magpies and plovers ex-  
changes signs.  
(...)  
The blue magpies and plovers now are her  
friends.  
To Chieko who has already given up being  
human  
This terrifying beautiful morning sky is the  
finest place to walk.  
Chieko flies.<sup>20</sup>

The poem emphasises the link between sanity, language and being human which – once broken – exposes madness. This link will be further explored later in the paper. The image of Chieko playing with birds – her only friends – is the core of the next poem in the collection: “Chieko Playing with Plovers” (千鳥と遊ぶ智恵子, 1937). Takamura attributes the distance between Chieko and the world to her inability to live peacefully within the world, especially the world of human being: “It seems that she kept as part of her inner self the fate of not being able to live safely in this world. So isolatedly did she live in a world whose air was different from that of this world”.<sup>21</sup>

Chieko’s detachment from the human world, which is metaphorically rendered by the images of birds and wind, is further elaborated on in “Invaluable Chieko” (値ひがたき智恵子) written in July 12, 1937. The speaker in the poem emphasises the unearthly quality of Chieko:

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<sup>17</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 79.

<sup>18</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 114.

<sup>19</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>20</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 115.

<sup>21</sup> Idem, “The Latter Half of Chieko’s Life”, p. 224.

智恵子は見えないものを見、  
聞えないものを聞く。  
智恵子は行けないところへ行き、  
出来ないことを為る。<sup>22</sup>

Chieko sees what one cannot see,  
hears what one cannot hear.  
Chieko goes where one cannot go,  
does what one cannot do.<sup>23</sup>

The uncanny power of mad Chieko is associated with “endless, desolate zone of beauty” (限りない荒漠の美意識圏) out to which she “strayed out” (さまよひ出た). The world or zone Chieko is to be found now has two attributes: limitlessness or eternity and isolation which results in solitude. “Chieko no longer has a ticket to the human world”<sup>24</sup> (智恵子はもう人間界の切符を持たない)<sup>25</sup> in the final phrase there is a strong opposition between Chieko belonging to the realm of birds and wind and the speaker or Kōtarō himself who belongs to the human world and from this stance judges the woman.

The poet is, however, much aware of the discrepancy between himself and his wife. This is the source of his anguish in the latter part of *Chieko shō*. In the poem “Two at the Foot of the Mountain” (山麓の二人) written in July 12, 1938 Kōtarō uses the image of splitting which he applies on various levels of meaning. The poem starts with “The back of the mountain of Bandai that splits in two”<sup>26</sup> (二つに裂けて傾く磐梯山の裏山).<sup>27</sup> This is used as a background for introducing Chieko's own words: “I'll go to pieces pretty soon”<sup>28</sup> (わたしもうちき駄目になる),<sup>29</sup> which are repeated twice in the poem. The mountain that splits in two is also a figure of prolepsis: it anticipates the poet's heart splitting and dropping away (わたくしの心はこの時二つに裂けて脱落し).<sup>30</sup> The observation of mad Chieko enclosed within her own world, however, is not only a source of pain in *Chieko shō*. The poet frequently seems to be entranced with the beauty of what he sees. “Some two hundred yards off in the windbreak,/in the evening sun/bathed in pine pollen I stand, forgetting time”<sup>31</sup> (二丁も離れた防風林の夕日の中で/ 松の花粉をあびながら私はいつまでも立ち尽す)<sup>32</sup> – he reflects upon his own infatuation. The pine pollen 松の花粉 is evocative of both eternity (this is what pine symbolises) and waiting (*matsu* in Japanese combines by means of homonymy both pine and waiting). The speaker who watches someone transcending limits of time is thus captured in an eternal moment.

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<sup>22</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 84.

<sup>23</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 117.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 85.

<sup>26</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 118.

<sup>27</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 86.

<sup>28</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 118.

<sup>29</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 86.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>31</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 116.

<sup>32</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 83.

## 2. Madness and silence

The description of madness in *Chieko shō* is closely related to the problem of language, not only because it poses a question of how to express the inexpressible but also because Kōtarō uses Chieko's language to speak about her condition. In fact, when he recalls his first meeting with Chieko around 1911, he focuses on her language: "She was terribly elegant, laconic, and, when she spoke, her sentences would fade away toward the end"<sup>33</sup>(彼女はひどく優雅で、無口で、語尾が消えてしまい).<sup>34</sup> The manner of Chieko's speech is also presented as so idiosyncratic as to affect the meaning, or rather the process of understanding on the part of the listener: "That, taken together with her faint voice, meant you couldn't make out what she was saying".<sup>35</sup> These two characteristics of Chieko's speech noted by Kōtarō when they met, namely brevity (or compactness) and evanescence (also lack of distinctiveness), seem both to attract him and to hinder (or misguide) his understanding. These traits will later be developed in his poems and her incomprehensible or child-like speech will become a token of Chieko's madness. The process of loosing senses is depicted in *Chieko shō* above all as the process of loosing human language intrinsic to human nature.

In a poem written in August 1912, which is the fourth in Kōtarō's collection, words are endowed with great power. They are compared to fire and lightning as they are powerful enough to destroy the speaker's peace and quiet. The quietude so much desired by the speaker in the poem is compared to water's quiet (水の静けさ), and the use of two elements: fire and water strengthen the contrast around which the whole poem is built. The quietude is threatened by unnecessary words and the speaker warns the addressee (i.e. Chieko) "No, you must not/touch this quiet water"<sup>36</sup>(いけない、いけない/ 静かにしてゐる此の水に手を触れてはいけない).<sup>37</sup> He also emphasises that his present peace is the effect of a hard-fought battle: "The quietude of my heart is a treasure I bought with blood,/A treasure for which I have sacrificed blood that you would not understand"<sup>38</sup>(私の心の静寂は血で買った宝である/あなたには解りやうのない血を犠牲にした宝である).<sup>39</sup> The only way to avoid disturbing the longed-for quietude is to reject all words: "You must not say any more/What you are about to say is one of the greatest dangers on earth./If you keep your mouth shut/It'll be all right/Open up, and it'll be lightning and fire"<sup>40</sup>(あなたは其のさきを私に話

<sup>33</sup> Idem, "The Latter Half of Chieko's Life", p. 227.

<sup>34</sup> Idem, "Chieko no hansei", p. 137.

<sup>35</sup> P. Birnbaum, *Modern Girls, Shining Stars, the Skies of Tokyo: 5 Japanese Women*, p. 58.

<sup>36</sup> K. Takamura, "Part II: Chieko", p. 95.

<sup>37</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 18.

<sup>38</sup> Idem, "Part II: Chieko", p. 95.

<sup>39</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 19.

<sup>40</sup> Idem, "Part II: Chieko", p. 95.

してはいけない/あなたの今言はうとしてゐる事は世の中の最大危険の一つだ/口から外へ出さなければいい/出せば則すなはち雷火である).<sup>41</sup>

The deteriorating state of Chieko is illustrated by her loss of language. In “Chieko Riding the Wind” Kōtarō starts with a simple statement: “Chieko, now mad, will not speak”<sup>42</sup> (狂った智恵子は口をきかない).<sup>43</sup> Conversation with people is replaced by exchanges of signs or communication (相図) with birds: blue magpies and plovers (尾長や千鳥). This transformation of Chieko, however, is not entirely unexpected. In the first poem of the collection “To Someone” Chieko is compared to a little bird (小鳥のやうに臆病で).<sup>44</sup> With time Chieko is more and more identified with birds. The poem “Chieko Plays With Plovers” (千鳥と遊ぶ智恵子), written July 11, 1937, is created around the image of a young women playing with birds referred to as “*innumerable* friends” (無数の友だち). Kōtarō uses the onomatopoeia: *Chii, chii, chii, chii, chii* to imitate the sound of the birds who call to Chieko and ask her for shells. The lack of verbal response on the part of Chieko is shown as one of the premises to exclude her from the human world: “Leaving off entirely the task of being human,/Now having passed into the natural world, Chieko seems just a speck”<sup>45</sup> (もう天然の向うへ行つてしまつた智恵子の/うしろ姿がぼつんと見える).<sup>46</sup> Finally Chieko, who was like a bird and who used to play with birds, becomes a bird herself. Kōtarō describes her in his essay “The Latter Half of Chieko’s Life”: “she took to standing in a corner of a pine grove and calling out, consecutively for a solid hour, ‘Kōtarō Chieko Kōtarō Chieko’”<sup>47</sup> (松林の一角に立って、光太郎智恵子光太郎智恵子と一時間も連呼したりするようになった).<sup>48</sup>

The bird-like quality of Chieko’s voice and behaviour and her childlikeness are often merged into one image. In “Chieko Plays With Plovers” the way Chieko is depicted evokes an image of a child in the play-ground: “Where there is no one on the sands of Kujūkuri/ Sitting on the sand Chieko plays alone”<sup>49</sup> (人つ子ひとり居ない九十九里の砂浜の/砂にすわつて智恵子は遊ぶ).<sup>50</sup> It should be noted that Kōtarō very early focuses on the parallels between Chieko and a child. In “To Someone in the Suburbs” (郊外の人に), written November 25 1912, the speaker wishes Chieko good night, saying: “So sleep you, peacefully. (...) sleep like an infant”<sup>51</sup> (されば君は安らかに眠れかし (...) をさな児の如く眠れかし).<sup>52</sup> Very

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<sup>41</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 18.

<sup>42</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 115.

<sup>43</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 80.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>45</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 116.

<sup>46</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 83.

<sup>47</sup> Idem, “The Latter Half of Chieko’s Life”, p. 234.

<sup>48</sup> Idem, “Chieko no hansei”, p. 145.

<sup>49</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 116.

<sup>50</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 82.

<sup>51</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 97.



often she is compared to a child or is called child-like, for example in her whole-hearted embracing of Kōtarō and his work. Her response to his sculptures is also compared to one of a child (彼女の居ないこの世で誰が私の彫刻をそのように子供のようにうけ入れてくれるであろうか、彼女はそれを全幅的に受け入れ、理解し、熱愛した。)<sup>53</sup> When he tries to analyse after her death the first symptoms of her schizophrenia, he notices: “Even her pure-mindedness had something extraordinary about it. (...) The strength and depth of her love for and trust in me was, I dare say, that of an infant”<sup>54</sup> (その純真さえも唯ならぬものがあつたのである。(...) 私への愛と信頼の強さ深さは殆ど嬰兒(えいじ)のそれのようであつたといつていい)<sup>55</sup>

Childlikeness of Chieko is also traced by Kōtarō in her speech. In “Child’s Talk” (あどけない話), written in May 11, 1928, the way the woman speaks is referred to as “adokenai hanashi” – child-like talk. Kōtarō uses simple words and sentences “Tokyo has no sky at all” – says Chieko – “she wants to see the real sky”<sup>56</sup> (智恵子は東京に空が無いといふ、/ ほんとの空が見たいといふ)<sup>57</sup> When he changes the perspective to his own, the sentences, in a contrastive manner, become more complex: “there among fresh cherry leaves/ is a familiar, clear sky, old sky/ that I can’t separate from/ The dull and smoldering haze at the horizon/is the pink moist of the morning”<sup>58</sup> (桜若葉の間に在るのは、/ 切つても切れない/ むかしなじみのきれいな空だ/ どんよりけむる地平のぼかしは / うすもも色の朝のしめりだ)<sup>59</sup> Chieko’s words quoted or reported far more simple and straightforward, which makes them “adokenai” – childlike.

### 3. Madness and nature

The lack of language noticeable in Kōtarō’s depiction of Chieko is related to her closeness to nature (embodied by the landscapes of the countryside in the present Fukushima prefecture, where Chieko was born). “Leaving off entirely the task of being human, Now having passed into the natural world”<sup>60</sup> (人間商売さらりとやめて/もう天然の向うへ行ってしまった)<sup>61</sup> – we read in “Chieko Plays With Plovers”. This opposition between Kōtarō in the city (of Tokyo, we might add) and Chieko in the countryside is prevailing in *Chieko shō*. It is visible also in “Child’s Talk” where “the dull and smoldering haze at the horizon” in Tokyo is

<sup>52</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 33.

<sup>53</sup> Idem, “Chieko no hansei”, p. 123.

<sup>54</sup> Idem, “The Latter Half of Chieko’s Life”, p. 225.

<sup>55</sup> Idem, “Chieko no hansei”, p. 136.

<sup>56</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 113.

<sup>57</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 74.

<sup>58</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 113.

<sup>59</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 74.

<sup>60</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 116.

<sup>61</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 83.

contrasted with “The blue sky that every day comes out/above Mt. Atatara” (阿多羅山の山の上に/毎日出てゐる青い空) which is “the real sky Chieko means”<sup>62</sup> (智恵子のほんとの空だといふ).<sup>63</sup> In “Chieko Riding the Wind” Kōtarō’s lover is counted among the blue magpies in the sky. “This terrifyingly beautiful morning sky is the finest place to walk”<sup>64</sup> (恐ろしくきれいな朝の天空は絶好の遊歩場)<sup>65</sup> – Kōtarō sketches the landscape with Chieko flying.

The dichotomy between nature and city is even more distinct after Chieko’s death. In “The Latter Half of Chieko’s Life” Kōtarō writes about the influence living in Tokyo had on Chieko’s psychological state: “Tokyo was physically so unsuited to her. For her the air of Tokyo was always tasteless, dry and gritty”<sup>66</sup>(彼女にとっては肉体的に既に東京が不適當の地であった。東京の空気は彼女には常に無味乾燥でざらざらしていた).<sup>67</sup> He writes about Chieko’s “demand for a fresh, transparent nature”<sup>68</sup> (新鮮な透明な自然への要求)<sup>69</sup> which resulted in her clinging to whatever natural she could find nearby:

She tirelessly sketched the weeds growing around our house, studied them botanically, cultivated lilies and tomatoes in the bay window, ate vegetables raw, indulged herself by listening to a record of Beethoven’s Sixth Symphony...<sup>70</sup>

彼女は東京に居て此の要求をいろいろな方法で満たしていた。家のまわりに生える雑草の飽くなき写生、その植物学的探究、張出窓での百合花やトマトの栽培、野菜類の生食、ベトオフエンの第六交響楽レコオドへの惑溺（わくでき）というような事は皆この要求充足の変形であったに相違なく<sup>71</sup>

Nothing, Kōtarō emphasises, could become for Chieko a substitute for the real nature.

In “Metropolis” (メトロポリス), written October 30, 1949, Kōtarō, who moved after the Second World War to live in the countryside, comments in a poem on the irony of his and Chieko’s fate: “Into the depth of nature that Chieko longed for/the turning of fate has cast me./Fate destroyed the living Chieko in the capital/and put me, a child of the capital, here”<sup>72</sup> (智恵子が憧れてゐた深い自然の

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<sup>62</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 113.

<sup>63</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 74.

<sup>64</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 115.

<sup>65</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 80.

<sup>66</sup> Idem, “The Latter Half of Chieko’s Life”, pp. 219-220.

<sup>67</sup> Idem, “Chieko no hansei”, p. 128.

<sup>68</sup> Idem, “The Latter Half of Chieko’s Life”, p. 220.

<sup>69</sup> Idem, “Chieko no hansei”, p. 130.

<sup>70</sup> Idem, “The Latter Half of Chieko’s Life”, p. 220.

<sup>71</sup> Idem, “Chieko no hansei”, p. 130.

<sup>72</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 125.

真只中に/運命の曲折はわたくしを叩きこんだ。/ 運命は生きた智恵子を都会に殺し、/ 都会の子であるわたくしをここに置く)。<sup>73</sup>

#### 4. Madness, Art and Love

Apart from the harmful influence of Tokyo, Kōtarō names Chieko's pure and single-minded focus on art and love as the main causes for her collapse: "The greater reason that she ended with a mental collapse must have been her suffering from the contradictions and dead ends that arose between her fierce concentration on art, above all else, and her attempt to live a daily life founded on pure love for me"<sup>74</sup>(彼女がついに精神の破綻(はたん)を来すに至った更に大きな原因は何といってもその猛烈な芸術精進と、私への純真な愛に基く日常生活の営みとの間に起る矛盾撞着(どうちゃく)の悩みであったであろう)。<sup>75</sup> Kōtarō speaks about Chieko's dissatisfaction with her own work and her anguish as a result of criticism or rejection of her works. "Chieko, by shutting up her own self forever because of that rejection, may have worsened her introverted tendencies."<sup>76</sup> – he emphasises. He also focuses on the possible inner battle between Chieko's passion for creating art and her love for him (and his art):

She struggled so hard not to reduce the time for my work, no matter what, to protect my sculpture, to fend chores off from me. Before long she had reduced the amount of time sculpting in clay and, later, spinning silk threads, trying plant dyes on them, or weaving.<sup>77</sup>

彼女はどんな事があっても私の仕事の時間を減らすまいとし、私の彫刻をかばい、私を雑用から防ごうと懸命に努力をした。彼女はいつの間にか油絵勉強の時間を縮小し、或時は粘土で彫刻を試みたり、又後には絹糸をつむいだり、其を草木染にしたり、機織を始めた。二人の着物や羽織を手織で作ったのが今でも残っている。<sup>78</sup>

In Takamura's depiction Chieko's madness is a way of expressing her creativity. The conclusion is further substantiated by Kōtarō's account of Chieko's sketching. She is said to have sketched her hallucinations:

Her symptoms took one step forward, than one step backward. At first she often saw hallucinations, so sketched them one by one in her notebook as she lay in bed. She drew and showed them to me as they changed from moment to moment, writing down the time. She enthusiastically told me about the incomparable beauty of their shapes and colors. After a certain period of

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<sup>73</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 108.

<sup>74</sup> Idem, "The Latter Half of Chieko's Life", p. 221.

<sup>75</sup> Idem, "Chieko no hansei", p. 130.

<sup>76</sup> Idem, "The Latter Half of Chieko's Life", p. 222.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 223.

<sup>78</sup> K. Takamura, „Chieko no hansei”, p. 133.

such behavior, she began to have periods of vague consciousness, and I began to help her eat and bathe just as I would an infant.<sup>79</sup>

症状一進一退。彼女は最初幻覚を多く見るので寝台に臥(ふ)しながら其を一々手帳に写生していた。刻々に変化するのを時間を記入しながら次々と描いては私に見せた。形や色の無類の美しさを感じて語った。そうした或る期間を経ているうちに今度は全体に意識がひどくぼんやりするようになり、食事も入浴も嬰兒(えいじ)のように私がさせた。<sup>80</sup>

“She lived single-mindedly for art and for love of me.”<sup>81</sup> – Kōtarō emphasises. His concepts of both art and love are highly romantic. Art and love are entirely absorbing, mutually exclusive and demanding sacrifice. *Chieko shō* thus becomes a testimony to Kōtarō’s ideal of love understood as mutual understanding beyond words. It is expressed in such poems as „Fountain of Mankind” (人類の泉) (March 15, 1913): “You alone/are kind enough to see my life from its roots,/understand me as a whole.”<sup>82</sup> (私の生(いのち)を根から見てくれるのは/私を全部に解してくれるのは/ただあなたです).<sup>83</sup> This is a romantic view of love, shared also by the members of Shirakaba, White Birch Society, whose ideas Kōtarō greatly appreciated. The love he applauds is predestined and absolute. He emphasises: “You were born for me./ For me, there is you,/there is you, there is you”<sup>84</sup> (あなたは私のために生れたのだ/ 私にはあなたがある/あなたがある あなたがある).<sup>85</sup> His concept of love abounds in paradoxes, one of which involves solitude: “Because of you my life becomes complex, becomes rich./And knowing solitude I don’t feel solitude.”<sup>86</sup> (あなたによつて私の生(いのち)は複雑になり 豊富になります/そして孤独を知りつつ 孤独を感じないのです).<sup>87</sup> In fact, the madness of Chieko only deepens the romantic quality of her love for Kōtarō. It well expressed in “Invaluable Chieko” written one year before her death: “Chieko does not see the living me,/yearns for the me behind me.”<sup>88</sup> (智恵子は現身(うつしみ)のわたしを見ず、わたしのうしろのわたしに焦がれる。)<sup>89</sup> The phase is crucial as it epitomises the paradox of the whole collection of poems in which falling into madness is related to the failure of communication.

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<sup>79</sup> Idem, “The Latter Half of Chieko’s Life”, p. 233.

<sup>80</sup> Idem, “Chieko no hansei”, pp. 144-145.

<sup>81</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 224.

<sup>82</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 102.

<sup>83</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 44.

<sup>84</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 103.

<sup>85</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 45.

<sup>86</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 103.

<sup>87</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>88</sup> Idem, “Part II: Chieko”, p. 117.

<sup>89</sup> Idem, *Chieko shō*, p. 84.

## Closing remarks

On the one hand, it is possible to say that in *Chieko shō* Kōtarō speaks of love and madness. Birnbaum aptly notices the simplicity of language and “conversational rhythms” which are used to create “the ideal modern love where emotions, not social mores, rule”.<sup>90</sup> On the other hand, Takamura’s collection of poems about Chieko may be said to trace the process of losing language and reducing communication merely to an act of observation and description. Such a view is bound to reveal *Chieko shō* as a “desperate attempt to discover a relationship that never existed”.<sup>91</sup> It is also true that Kōtarō’s volume was influenced by Émile Verhaeren’s *Les heures claires* (1896).<sup>92</sup> The apparent opposition may be reconciled, however, if we read *Chieko shō* as Kōtarō’s vision of Chieko, love and language in general. In “Chieko the Element” (元素智恵子) written in 1949 Takamura speaks about Chieko existing in his flesh (わたくしの肉に居る).<sup>93</sup> He could hardly comprehend the words of mad Chieko. He emphasizes her loss of language in terms of Chieko’s giving up on being human. But he needs her words to survive as a poet and as a human being.

When Chieko sleeps within me, I stray  
I am right when I hear Chieko's voice in my ears<sup>94</sup>

うちに智恵子の睡る時わたくしは過ち、  
耳に智恵子の声をきく時わたくしは正しい。<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> P. Birnbaum, *Modern Girls, Shining Stars, the Skies of Tokyo: 5 Japanese Women*, p. 63.

<sup>91</sup> Comp.: D. Keene, *Dawn to the West. Japanese Literature of the Modern Era. Poetry, Drama, Criticism*, p. 299.

<sup>92</sup> The introductory analysis of the influence may be found in K. Sonnenberg, *Miłość, natura i miasto. Wpływ Émile’a Verhaerena na twórczość Takamury Kōtarō*, „Porównania,” no. 18/2016, pp. 135-154.

<sup>93</sup> K. Takamura, *Chieko shō*, p. 106.

<sup>94</sup> In my translation.

<sup>95</sup> K. Takamura, *Chieko shō*, op. cit., p. 107.

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